BLM LIBRARY
88076645

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

N-13268
1791

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT RECORD

NV-050-7-19

for

Water Tank, Water Pipeline
and Access Road Right-of-Way

T. 25 S., R. 59 E., Section 13 (Within)
T. 25 S., R. 59 E., Section 18 (Within)

Bureau of Land Management
Las Vegas District
Las Vegas, Nevada

Prepared by: Beverly L. Martin
Realty Specialist

April 18, 1977

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 85, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 85, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

#1568830932 ID: 88076645 TD 492 .M37 1977

I. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

A. Proposed Action

Peter A. Simon II, Diamond Gold Mining Company, requests a right-of-way across National Resource Lands to legalize an existing tank, water pipeline and access road, and to construct two future water tanks on this site. The existing pipeline and access road (which is along the pipeline) extends 2017.10 ft. x 20 feet wide, and the tank site measures 660.0 ft. x 330.0 ft. and occupies National Resource Land legally described as T. 25 S., R. 59 E., Section 13 (within), and T. 25 S., R. 60 E., Section 18 (within). A review of the case file indicates that the right-of-way is to ~~be utilized~~ supply water for various quasi-municipal and domestic purposes such as a 40-unit motel, bar, restaurant, gravel washing, service station and a home. Discussions with the applicant also indicate that this right-of-way will be utilized to provide water for the new State Prison Complex under construction within one mile of this site.

Application for this right-of-way was filed September 27, 1976 under the provisions of the Act of February 15, 1901 (February 1, 1905, Act of March 4, 1911, as amended), 31 Stat. 790; 43 U.S.C. 959. Since these acts have been repealed, subject application must now be processed in accordance with Sec. 501(a)(1) of P.L. 94-579, October 21, 1976, 43 U.S.C. 1761, Title V, 90 Stat. 2776.

The Unit Resource Analysis and Management Framework Plan for the Stateline Planning Unit have been completed and the subject application appears compatible with these planning documents.

B. Alternatives

The only alternative to this right-of-way would be to deny the application. A denial of this right-of-way would subsequently involve commencing trespass procedures relative to the existing tanks and appurtenances.

I. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

A. Proposed Action

Peter A. Simon II, Diamond Gold Mining Company, requests a right-of-way across National Resource Lands to legalize an existing tank, water pipeline and access road, and to construct two future water tanks on this site. The existing pipeline and access road (which is along the pipeline) extends 2017.10 ft. x 20 feet wide, and the tank site measures 660.0 ft. x 330.0 ft and occupies National Resource Land legally described as T. 25 S., R. 59 E., Section 13 (within), and T. 25 S., R. 60 E., Section 18 (within). A review of the case file indicates that the right-of-way is to be utilized for various quasi-municipal and domestic purposes such as a 40-unit motel, bar, restaurant, gravel washing, service station and a home. Discussions with the applicant also indicate that this right-of-way will be utilized to provide water for the new State Prison Complex under construction within one mile of this site.

Application for this right-of-way was filed September 27, 1976 under the provisions of the Act of February 15, 1901 (February 1, 1905, Act of March 4, 1911, as amended). 31 Stat. 790; 43 U.S.C. 959. Since these acts have been repealed, subject application must now be processed in accordance with Sec. 501(a)(1) of P.L. 94-579, October 21, 1976, 43 U.S.C. 1761, Title V, 90 Stat. 2776.

The Unit Resource Analysis and Management Framework Plan for the Stateline Planning Unit have been completed and the subject application appears compatible with these planning documents.

B. Alternatives

The only alternative to this right-of-way would be to deny the application. A denial of this right-of-way would subsequently involve commencing trespass procedures relative to the existing tanks and appurtenances.

II. Description of the Existing Environment

A. Non-Living Components

1. Water

No live water is present in the area. But the irrigation farming, domestic and livestock watering usage validates the availability of water in the area. The presence of natural drainage channels is indicative of another water source, appearing as intermittent runoff following a rainfall.

2. Land

The soils are gravelly fine sandy loams, well drained and moderately permeable. The potential for wind or water erosion varies from moderate to severe depending on vegetative cover.

The subject area is relatively flat. Present land uses in the valley include occupancy, mining, livestock grazing and irrigation farming. It is also within the proposed Jean Off-Road Vehicle Area. As mentioned earlier, it is within one mile of the new State Prison Complex.

3. Air

Air quality is considered good. Minimal pollution that exists, is caused by blowing sand and vehicle use.

B. Living Components

1. Vegetation

Sparse vegetation in the area consists of sagebrush, yucca, creosote bush, Joshua tree and various other southern Nevada desert shrubs. No rare or endangered species have been identified in this area.

2. Animals

Lizards, snakes, rabbits and rodents are included in the wildlife inhabiting this area. No endangered animals exist here, however, the desert tortoise (classified as "rare" by the State) is found in the area.

II. Description of the Existing Environment

A. Non-Living Components

1. Water

No live water is present in the area. But the irrigation farming, domestic and livestock watering usage validates the availability of water in the area. The presence of natural drainage channels is indicative of another water source, appearing as intermittent runoff following a rainfall.

2. Land

The soils are gravelly fine sandy loams, well drained and moderately permeable. The potential for wind or water erosion varies from moderate to severe depending on vegetative cover.

The subject area is relatively flat. Present land uses in the valley include occupancy, mining, livestock grazing and irrigation farming. It is also within the proposed Jean Off-Road Vehicle Area. As mentioned earlier, it is within one mile of the new State Prison Complex.

3. Air

Air quality is considered good. Minimal pollution that exists, is caused by blowing sand and vehicle use.

B. Living Components

1. Vegetation

Sparse vegetation in the area consists of sagebrush, yucca, creosote bush, Joshua tree and various other southern Nevada desert shrubs. No rare or endangered species have been identified in this area.

2. Animals

Lizards, snakes, rabbits and rodents are included in the wildlife inhabiting this area. No endangered animals exist here, however, the desert tortoise (classified as "rare" by the State) is found in the area.

C. Ecological Interrelationships

The lack of permanent water sources and low rainfall restrict numbers and variety of both flora and fauna. Most plants and animals which can survive in this environment have either the ability to store water, or can tolerate long periods without it.

As in any ecosystem, there is an energy pyramid in the desert environment. Plants are the primary food producers for herbivorous animals such as rodents, insects and some reptiles, and these in turn, are eaten by carnivores such as snakes, birds of prey, coyotes, etc.

In the same way that animals depend on plants, plants also depend on animals. For example, seeds buried by rodents are often forgotten, but protected from the sun, they later sprout and grow when conditions become favorable. Other plants notably cacti and mesquite, depend upon animals and birds to disperse their seeds through eating of the fruits or pods and elimination of the undigested seeds at another site.

D. Human Values

1. Landscape Character

The landscape character at the location of this proposed action is one of desert shrub lying within a valley. The aesthetic quality, however, has been reduced due to the presence of the 1,000,000 water storage tank. Its major theme though, remains one of a rugged, western, sun-drenched area.

2. Wilderness Study

This site is devoid of any wilderness values due to the existence of the nearby town of Jean, Nevada and other commercial enterprises in the area. Furthermore, this action does not involve a roadless area of 5,000 acres or more, necessitating a wilderness study as specified in Sec. 603(a) of the Organic Act.

3. Socio-Cultural Interests

There are no known educational-scientific values present at the location of the proposed action. Field examination of this right-of-way failed to uncover any indication of antiquity values. (See referenced Cultural Resources Report No.5575(N), in case file N-13268).

C. Ecological Interrelationships

The lack of permanent water sources and low rainfall restrict numbers and variety of both flora and fauna. Most plants and animals which can survive in this environment have either the ability to store water, or can tolerate long periods without it.

As in any ecosystem, there is an energy pyramid in the desert environment. Plants are the primary food producers for herbivorous animals such as rodents, insects and some reptiles, and these in turn, are eaten by carnivores such as snakes, birds of prey, coyotes, etc.

In the same way that animals depend on plants, plants also depend on animals. For example, seeds buried by rodents are often forgotten, but protected from the sun, they later sprout and grow when conditions become favorable. Other plants notably cacti and mesquite, depend upon animals and birds to disperse their seeds through eating of the fruits or pods and elimination of the undigested seeds at another site.

D. Human Values

1. Landscape Character

The landscape character at the location of this proposed action is one of desert shrub lying within a valley. The aesthetic quality, however, has been reduced due to the presence of the 1,000,000 water storage tank. Its major theme though, remains one of a rugged, western, sun-drenched area.

2. Wilderness Study

This site is devoid of any wilderness values due to the existence of the nearby town of Jean, Nevada and other commercial enterprises in the area. Furthermore, this action does not involve a roadless area of 5,000 acres or more, necessitating a wilderness study as specified in Sec. 603(a) of the Organic Act.

3. Socio-Cultural Interests

There are no known educational-scientific values present at the location of the proposed action. Field examination of this right-of-way failed to uncover any indication of antiquity values. (See referenced Cultural Resources Report No.5875(N), in case file N-13268).

III. Analysis of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

A. Proposed Action

1. Environmental Impacts

a. Anticipated Impacts

(1) Legalization of the existing right-of-way would constitute no environmental impacts which have not already been experienced. Such impacts include erosion, disruption of aesthetic quality, damaged drainage channels and severe blading.

(2) Some temporary air and noise pollution would be created by the construction of the two future tanks in addition to the maintenance activities of all three tanks.

(3) Temporary disturbance of any nearby wildlife would occur during future construction and maintenance activities.

(4) Visual intrusion would be created by the presence of these three 1,000,000 gallon water tanks.

(5) The principal beneficial impact of this action would be the availability of water for the new prison complex under construction in the immediate area, as well as for other residential and business uses. A secondary benefit would be the creation of employment opportunities due to the construction and maintenance operations of this right-of-way.

b. Possible Mitigating or Enhancing Measures

(1) Existing and future water tanks should be painted a color, like or similar to Dutch Boy's "Weathered Copper", No. 42/52, in order to blend in with the natural surroundings.

(2) Ingress and egress for construction and maintenance activities should be confined to the existing roadways.

III. Analysis of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

A. Proposed Action

1. Environmental Impacts

a. Anticipated Impacts

(1) Legalization of the existing right-of-way would constitute no environmental impacts which have not already been experienced. Such impacts include erosion, disruption of aesthetic quality, damaged drainage channels and severe blasting.

(2) Some temporary air and noise pollution would be created by the construction of the two future tanks in addition to the maintenance activities of all three tanks.

(3) Temporary disturbance of any nearby wildlife would occur during future construction and maintenance activities.

(4) Visual intrusion would be created by the presence of these three 1,000,000 gallon water tanks.

(5) The principal beneficial impact of this action would be the availability of water for the new prison complex under construction in the immediate area, as well as for other residential and business uses. A secondary benefit would be the creation of employment opportunities due to the construction and maintenance operations of this right-of-way.

b. Possible Mitigating or Enhancing Measures

(1) Existing and future water tanks should be painted a color, like or similar to Dutch Boy's "Weathered Copper", No. 42\52, in order to blend in with the natural surroundings.

(2) Ingress and egress for construction and maintenance activities should be confined to the existing roadways.

(3) Future blading of any part of this right-of-way should be prohibited.

(4) All natural drainage channels should be restored to their natural drainage pattern.

(5) All bladed areas and the water tank pad should be covered with 1" minimum cover of aggregate to prevent erosion.

c. Recommendations for Mitigation or Enhancement

If subject right-of-way is granted to legalize this action and permit construction of the two future tanks, all possible mitigating measures mentioned above should be included as part of the grant.

d. Residual Impacts

In all probability, ~~most~~ some of the impacts cannot be mitigated. However, ~~since these impacts are relatively minor~~ if the above mitigating measures are complied with, the environment ~~will~~ not be substantially degraded. should

2. Relationship Between Short-Term Use and Long-Term Productivity

This right-of-way has experienced soil disturbance with the removal of grass, forbs, brush and shrubs. Construction activities during the discrete operations resulted in some local air pollution. Future construction and any aftermath maintenance work will create further minor air pollution. However, this construction and maintenance work will provide employment for various workers thereby promoting economic enterprises in the community.

Aesthetics in the area will be slightly impacted by the 1,000,000 gallon water tanks and ecological interrelationships will also suffer some alteration. These adverse impacts, though, are not expected to pose long-term risks to health and safety.

Although some environmental losses will occur, the socio-economic gains realized will offset these losses.

(3) Future blading of any part of this right-of-way should be prohibited.

(4) All natural drainage channels should be restored to their natural drainage pattern.

(5) All bladed areas and the water tank pad should be covered with 1" minimum cover of aggregate to prevent erosion.

c. Recommendations for Mitigation or Enhancement

If subject right-of-way is granted to legalize this action and permit construction of the two ~~water~~ tanks, all possible mitigating measures mentioned above should be included as part of the grant.

d. Residual Impacts

In all probability, most of the impacts cannot be mitigated. However, since these impacts are relatively minor, the environment will not be substantially degraded.

2. Relationship Between Short-Term Use and Long-Term Productivity

This right-of-way has experienced soil disturbance with the removal of grass, forbs, brush and shrubs. Construction activities during the discrete operations resulted in some local air pollution. Future construction and any aftermath maintenance work will create further minor air pollution. However, this construction and maintenance work will provide employment for various workers thereby promoting economic enterprises in the community.

Aesthetics in the area will be slightly impacted by the 1,000,000 gallon water tanks and ecological interrelationships will also suffer some alteration. These adverse impacts, though, are not expected to pose long-term risks to health and safety.

Although some environmental losses will occur, the socio-economic gains realized will offset these losses.

3. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments

Analysis of all impacts related to this action indicates that no irreversible and/or irretrievable commitments would occur.

B. Alternative

The alternative action of denying this application and commencing trespass procedures could ultimately result in the removal of this water pipeline and storage tank. This action would create a duplication of the major environmental impacts stated above. The local domestic and commercial users in the area as well as the new prison complex, would be forced to seek water from another source.

IV. Persons, Groups, and Government Agencies Consulted

None.

V. Intensity of Public Interest

None, outside of the applicant.

VI. Participating Staff

Beverly Martin, Realty Specialist
Gordon Cheniae, District Realty Specialist
Stanton D. Rolf, District Archaeologist

VII. Summary

This action involving legalization of the existing water tank, pipeline and access road and granting permission to construct two future water tanks, would result in minimum residual impacts on the environment. It is further determined that no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources would occur.

3. Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments

Analysis of all impacts related to this action indicates that no irreversible and/or irretrievable commitments would occur.

B. Alternative

The alternative action of denying this application and commencing trespass procedures could ultimately result in the removal of this water pipeline and storage tank. This action would create a duplication of the major environmental impacts stated above. The local domestic and commercial users in the area as well as the new prison complex, would be forced to seek water from another source.

IV. Persons, Groups, and Government Agencies Consulted

None.

V. Intensity of Public Interest

None, outside of the applicant.

VI. Participating Staff

Beverly Martin, Realty Specialist
Gordon Chenier, District Realty Specialist
Stanton D. Rolf, District Archaeologist

VII. Summary

This action involving legalization of the existing water tank, pipeline and access road and granting permission to construct two future water tanks, would result in minimum residual impacts on the environment. It is further determined that no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources would occur.

VIII. Signatures

Date	Beverly L. Martin, Realty Specialist

Recommended for Approval by:

Date	Denise P. Meridith, Environmental Coordinator
Date	Frank E. Bingham Chief, Division of Resource Management
Date	Jeff O. Holdren, Area Manager

Approved by:

Date	John S. Boyles, District Manager

VIII. Signatures

Prepared by:

Beverly L. Martin, Realty Specialist

Date _____

Recommended for Approval by:

Denise P. Meridith, Environmental Coordinator

Date _____

Frank E. Bingham
Chief, Division of Resource Management

Date _____

Approved by:

Jeff O. Holdren, Area Manager

Date _____

John S. Doyles, District Manager

Date _____